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ABSTRACT

This paper presents findings of a study that examined the change process in 28 schools, with a focus on how principals went about transforming traditional school-work cultures into quality systems. The principals had participated in Managing Productive Schools (MPS), a comprehensive systems-approach program based on quality management concepts. Data were derived from interviews with the principals, a teacher survey, and administration of a school/work profile to teachers. This paper presents findings based on the interview data. It discusses themes of visionary leadership, cooperative strategic planning, systems thinking and action, innovative information systems, continual improvement, human-resource development, quality programs and services, quality culture, and customer satisfaction. A conclusion is that change is determined by a faculty's readiness to address challenges and that developing staff readiness is the principal's responsibility. The principals provided the knowledge and skills for a systemic framework of change. The strength of their vision of success for all students and belief in their faculty's capacity to respond to students' needs were crucial for successful change. Transforming the work culture of schools from bureaucratic patterns to more responsive structures requires leaders who understand the challenge, embrace systems thinking, and have the facilitation skills to engineer school development over time. Two figures are included. (Contains 21 references.) (LMI)

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Managing Change from a Quality Perspective

A Paper Presentation

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Managing Change from a Quality Perspective

As schools, along with all other social institutions, shed bureaucratic characteristics in order to become more responsive to emerging needs, they will require leaders who are both knowledgeable about and capable of engineering the transformation of basic work cultures. The failures of well funded, major change efforts that have sought to address fundamental problems with traditional school work patterns, programs and services underscore the difficult challenges leaders face in managing change (Mirel, 1994; Welhange, Smith & Lipham, 1992). Many are wondering now about the potential for fundamental change within traditional educational institutions. Fullan and Miles (1992) have identified certain characteristic patterns with reform failures that are instructive: 1) faulty mental maps of change, 2) complex problems affecting change efforts, 3) impatient leadership and superficial solutions, and 4) misunderstanding the power of resistance.

There is now sufficient evidence about both successes and failures with change efforts to predict that the workable schools of tomorrow will be invented in places where leaders have a vision of a different kind of schooling, and also possess the knowledge and skills to engineer change over time toward that vision. New forms of work are likely to derive from systems thinking, and from tackling all structures and programs simultaneously and developmentally. Building learning organizations will result from systems thinking about organizaional change, and will require a fundamental rethinking of the prevailing concepts of leadership (Senge & Lannon-Kim, 1991). What is emerging is a view of leaders who enable workers to continually expand their capabilities to shape the future. The new leaders will be designers, teachers, facilitators and stewards in shaping new forms of schooling.

Beginning in 1987, several groups of principals were prepared to train their peers in a comprehensive systems approach to managing change, known as Managing Productive Schools (MPS: Snyder, 1988). Until now, the experiences of those principals who are MPS trainers have been observed only informally over the years, and some of their stories have been shared in numerous publications and presentations as illustrations of schooling challenges and leadership strategies for success. Our perception is that this select group of principals does in fact possess a command of the knowledge base on change, and is especially skillful in facilitating change over time. This study has been an effort to gather more systematic evidence about the change process in principals' schools, as they move toward Quality systems, for building useful mental models about changing school work cultures over time.

The story of 28 principals is reported here, telling how they are responding to the challenges of transforming traditional school work cultures over time. The themes and patterns that we found throughout the interviews are presented as one voice, a voice that speaks to the transition process and dimensions of restructuring school work cultures to respond to current challenges. The 28 stories have been collapsed into a pseudo-typology, within a Quality frame, to give the reader a broad overview of the elements of change we found. It is our hope that the perspectives of principals, whose schools are in transition to Quality work cultures, will highlight the necessity for principals to become competent change masters. First, let us consider a rationale for change.

Changing the Culture of Work

In order that schools may respond to challenges of the late 1990s, many of the deep-rooted traditions of schooling face extinction, and in their place are likely to evolve dynamic and energetic work cultures. What seems to be happening, not only in the USA, but throughout the world, is a virtual transformation of governments, agencies, institutions, industry and businesses, all of which are responding to rapid changes in the environment and to technological pressures (Snyder, Anderson & Johnson, 1992). At issue for all social agencies is the fundamental traditions of work.

Bureaucratic systems that have been honed over the past century, and have served well the needs of an age gone by, are rapidly being replaced with more fluid and responsive forms of work. Chubb and Moe (1990), policy analysts from the Brookings Institution, have observed that in the past the school organization's objective has been to deliver programs and services that were well designed by experts, and for schools to improve those over time. This bureaucratic approach to program development and school operations is now recognized by many as obsolete.

Schooling traditions, however, have tenacious roots (Haberman & Dill, 1993), and revising them to any extent will require an altogether new understanding of the dynamics of change (Tyack & Tobin, 1994). To illustrate the enduring strength of habit and tradition, and the challenges faced in changing bureaucracies, there is a discouraging conclusion from an experiment funded by the Annie Casey Foundation. Recently, $40 million was spent on a social experiment to alter the life chances of disadvantaged youth in four cities (Welhage, Smith & Lipham, 1992). A three-year study of the project, as it evolved in the four city school systems, concluded that fundamental changes in programs, policies and structures had *not* occurred, that most interventions were only supplemental to traditional educational programs, and that few workers were prepared to use evaluation data to assess the impact of innovations. Fundamental questions are therefore being raised

by many about the conditions for change and the leadership requirements for managing change successfully.

In another context, the Bensenville New American Schools Project, with $1.25 million, was dissolved after only one year of planning among the school districts and other agencies involved (Mirel, 1994). Although the initial stages of planning met most of the textbook criteria of excellence for planning change efforts, the issues of school governance, local control and school finance surfaced as major roadblocks, the big question being: "Who controls the schools?" As it turned out, the role of teachers for the new project was not anticipated well enough, and threats to teacher security prompted a negative campaign that shattered the very foundations of the project. Another question looms: is real change in school cultures a possibility?

Over the past decade Quality Management has captured the interest of educators for its effects upon the success of business and public institutions world wide; its systems approach to transforming organizational work cultures appears to be a key to successful efforts to manage change. A movement that has surfaced during the closing decades of the 20th century, now centers its attention on the "customer" as the focal point for systemic change. The mushrooming Quality literature began with successes that were reported from Japan in the use of statistical processes to improve productivity (Deming, 1986). Japan's initial success with Quality management led to further developments of the concepts of Quality Control (Feigenbaum, 1983) and Systems Thinking (Juran, 1988). These developments eventually led to the American Baldrige Award that is given to high performing companies (Steeples, 1992). Many of these Quality concepts have been embraced as a construct for transforming school work cultures (Kaufman and Zahn, 1993; Snyder, 1994 a & b). As yet, there is little evidence of the effects of Quality thinking on school transformation; perhaps this study will provide clues to its relevance and utility as a benchmark system for guiding change.

Background for the Study

For the past 15 years hundreds of principals have received training in the Managing Productive Schools (MPS) Training Program, a 25 day program based on a systems approach to change. Principals develop skills for framing school work cultures of shared decision making, which are driven by goals and anticipated increases in student success patterns (Snyder & Anderson, 1986; Snyder, 1988a). Work culture, within the MPS model, is defined as the way in which faculties address problems together while facilitating student success through the interdependent functions of school-wide planning, staff development, program development and school assessment practices (see figure 1). The

work culture can also be viewed as that psychological and social force that influences the direction and the quality of work in an organization. This "systems model" of school change assumes that for a school to enhance its capacity over time to respond to the changing requirements of student groups, as well as to parental and social pressures, there must evolve a *comprehensive school plan* that collaboratively addresses those needs. A *staff development system* then is designed and operationalized to equip the staff with the new knowledge and skills that are needed for achieving new goals. *Programs and services are continuously developed* that reflect goals and address the emerging needs of student populations. *School assessment* measures the extent to which goals have been realized in meeting student needs; and new areas for continuous improvement are identified from assessment data.

[figure 1 here]

There are 20 sets of specific skills taught in the MPS programs, which are practiced by principals in their schools, and then documented in a portfolio (Snyder & Giella, 1987). These skill sets center around the following areas:

. facilitating shared decision making and action toward results,
.designing planning and control systems,
.developing work team structures,
.gathering and using information for improvement purposes,
.designing professional training and coaching programs,
.training team and task force leaders,
.redesigning instructional programs to respond to changing student needs,
.developing funding proposals,
.assessing overall school improvement impact.

In addition, principals become skilled in developing a culture of success through sharing, networking and partnership structures; reward and recognition systems; and providing empowerment opportunities to teams. In 1987 the first group of MPS-trained principals was prepared in a ten-day program to become trainers of their peers. Since that time over 60 MPS trainers have been certified to teach other leaders to transform their school work cultures and other units.

Research Project

A case study design was used to examine the 28 schools. Data were collected from three sources: 1) Interviews with the principals, 2) Open ended questionnaires (n= 1,235), and 3) administration of the *School Work Culture Profile* (SWCP) to the same teacher population. The data were then triangulated to identify themes and patterns and to establish their validity and reliability. The study included principals and teachers from 28 schools in four states: 15 elementary schools, 4 middle schools, 3 high schools, 1 lab school, 1 middle/high school, and 1 full service school.

The surveys and interviews followed a qualitative methodology, examining the data for themes and patterns, which were then correlated with the literature bases on school change, systems thinking, leadership, restructuring , and quality management. The SWCP (Snyder, 1988b), is a diagnostic instrument that was administered to the entire staff at each school, and provides a quantitative measure on the relative involvement of the staff in decision making. The instrument has been through rigorous testing over the past eight years to establish reliability (alpha=.97), validity (scale mean= 5.53), as well as the primary factor analytic structure (one factor), and the secondary factor analytic structures (four higher order factors) (Johnson, Snyder, Anderson & Johnson, 1994).

During the data analysis phase of the study, two models were used for reporting the patterns: the *Managing Productive Schools* (MPS) model (see figure 1) and the *Quality Performance System* (QPS) model (see figure 2). The MPS model is grounded in patterns found within over 450 research studies, as well as in a systems approach to organizational change (Snyder & Anderson, 1986). The QPS model is part of a larger Education Quality System that was developed by Snyder and Acker-Hocevar (Snyder, 1994b), and tested for its content validity by Acker-Hocevar (1994). Because these models represent much of the relevant literature to this study, they offer a useful framework for analysis and reporting the principal interview data.

This paper presents patterns found in the interview portion of the case study, solely. Each of the three data sets offers critical information to the process of change, and will be published separately. Other articles are underway to present findings from the open-ended questionnaire, as well as from the SWCP, while a more complete report will be made in a forthcoming book publication.

Findings: The Principals' Voice

The transcribed interview data from 28 principals was entered into a computer program called *Ethnograph*, which made the identification of common themes possible within and across the 28 data sets. Patterns that emerged from data analysis are presented

here within the Quality Performance System, which not only outlines the work dimensions for managing change, but also presents these dimensions as a system to illustrate their interrelationship and interdependency for principals. These nine dimensions of managing change include: visionary leadership, strategic planning, systems thinking, information systems, continuous improvement, human resource development, Quality programs and services, Quality culture, and customer success and satisfaction.

Figure 2 here

Visionary Leadership

The focus of the principal's vision centers around the attainment of success for all student populations. The clarity of this image seems to drive strategic thinking and planning as principals manage the change process. Almost equally important is the vision for the school's work culture, which is described in multiple ways around the central theme of staff collaboration. A vision of student success has a corollary of staff success in working together toward common ends that influence students success. The mission of the school focuses on preparing students for life success, which is something of a departure from the graduation goals of past schooling decades. There is a sense of urgency in these principals' minds, that all populations, especially the at-risk populations, need to be prepared for a changing work world in which to make contributions to the community.

A principal of the middle/high school said it this way: "My vision is to develop a school where kids are successful, where the adults are cooperatively involved and ....want to work with us." An elementary principal reported, "My vision of this school is to help students to become productive citizens in the school. This is the first step in the voyage to becoming productive citizens involved in their community." Another principal shared: "I would like to see children leaving here as confident, self reliant learners where they have the ability to seek and handle information, to solve problems and communicate, and to adapt to the changes that they are going to encounter." The principal of the full service school, with students from pre-school to adults, said: 'My vision was to make this a "statue of liberty" school. With the adult population, there are people who are taking big steps towards completing a life long goal of getting a diploma or a GED. There are so many horizons that have not been explored."

All 28 principals are driven by a belief that most students want to, and can, succeed in what is required of them in school, and that the staff working together functions as a positive force in the lives of students. They see their leadership challenge as

one of encouraging teams to invent more powerful programs and services over time, and to sponsor innovation and piloting. Quality is everyone's job, they report consistently, where the focus is on the success of students.

However, not all teachers within a school are ready to participate in collaborative activities, or to make changes in their programs and services. Initially, much energy is devoted to developing the staff's readiness to see the need, while ensuring they have the skills and knowledge for engaging in the continuous improvement of programs and services. One principal shared: "The way we involved the staff in the vision statement was to ask: What do we want children to look like when they leave our schools? We listed ideas, clustered and labeled them and then wrote a brief, concise vision statement." Another principal told us: "My vision is for everybody to function as a leader; and have a focus for growth and be self directed. Everyone is trying new things, they're reading professional literatures, sharing, coaching each other, and facilitating student learning."

Strategic Planning

A vision of student success for all populations belongs not only to the principal in this study, but also to the staff, which guides strategic planning processes. School improvement goals are established through consensus building every year within structures for total staff involvement. Goal setting activities include not only teachers but parents, students and community leaders as well.

Action planning directs the work that is implicit in the school improvement goals, as task forces and teams develop blueprints for their action. A wide assortment of both temporary and permanent structures are designed for goal-related activity; and goals tend to become the responsibilities of many task forces and/or teaching teams as the work is divided. Principals report that the simple action planning of the past decade is evolving into more in-depth study groups before decisions are made. Simple solutions are being replaced more often by comprehensive plans and long lasting change efforts. In addition, teachers receive training in collaborative planning skills, and in facilitating collaborative ventures. As strategic plans become translated into action plans, many innovative structures evolved along the way to link talents with tasks. One elementary principal shared:

> " Before, the comprehensive plan was something I did over the summer after each committee had made recommendations. Teachers didn't seem to use the plan as a reference point to their work. And so, the next year the entire staff met together in the cafeteria to review the information we had gathered on our progress, along with the district and state goals. We then turned all the information into goals for

our school and strategies for our work. That year all 110 of the staff prepared the comprehensive plan, a copy of which was given to each team and task force for reference in their planning. Now, the teachers have the big picture and know how it all fits together; they see more of the whole puzzle."

Another principal reports: "We have used school-wide goal setting since I came. The first year we looked at surface things. The second year we dove into "integrated units," and this year we are implementing integrated instructionl programs. At the end of the year when we were deciding on goals for the next year, the teachers said they wanted to refine what we were beinning in interdisciplinary instruction. Now, goals drive the work we do."

Systems Thinking and Action

Principals report that unless they have been able to select their own staffs, the practice and concept of isolation in the school is shed only gradually, as this requires teacher training, coaching, and taking on new challenges over time. Gone is the discussion or tolerance of people working along. Structures that foster articulation across both curriculum and grade levels seem to flourish, while cross-functional teams focus on the integration of curriculum and services to meet student needs.

It is of special interest that multi-aged and nongraded teams were found as pilots, not only in elementary schools, but in every middle and high school in our study. The three secondary principals reported that content driven departments in their high schools are a thing of the past, for teachers are expanding the practice of integrated programs, while pilots are viewed as strategies to test new ideas.

A high school principal shared: "I think an important area of growth is that the leadership team now thinks they have moved beyond the quality and evaluation of the school as an administrative responsibility. This is now a responsibility that is shared by the leadership team and teachers, all of looking at student achievement and how to improve it. We have broken a sacred cow by talking about the effects of our collective work." Another principal reports: "The focus needs to be a core set of beliefs and standards that we are working towards. Everything needs to be driven by these. Interdependence breaks down some times, but we keep going and learning from our experiences."

Systems thinking, which refers to the interdependency of programs and functions around common goals, was consistent across schools. For example, "inclusion" programs flourish now as teachers work together to integrate special education students into the regular classroom. Interdisciplinary learning programs focus on a major theme, while

integrating separate curriculum areas. Networks and partnerships are thriving in the more high-involvement work cultures to make use of resources and opportunities outside the school. Advisory councils and leadership teams now address challenges that are common to the school as a whole, and solve problems that effect all units. The traditional boss-principal has been replaced with a leadership team that represents the various work units and community groups, and this team fosters interdependence and innovation among all work groups.

Information Systems

Establishing new information systems represents the greatest area of change for principals. The question, "How are we doing?" seems to prompt a search for new kinds of information. While many schools in the past excelled in gathering information and preparing reports for district and state compliance purposes, they found that the traditional kinds of data are not useful for improvement purposes. Principals and teachers are now seeking ways to gather new kinds of information that will inform their planning. And so the question looms large: "What kinds of information will help us improve our services?" Parent and community survey data are being used more often now for improvement planning. Analyzing accomplishments, in relation to goals, also points out areas for improvement.

The biggest area of change concerning information systems relates to the use of student performance data. Principals continue to pay attention to attendance patterns, test performance, honor roll, annual comparisons, bus referrals, percentages going to college, and grade distributions. However, new curriculum rubrics and continuous progress programs offer challenging opportunities for gathering more detailed information on student progress, and teachers are learning new skills to analyze such information. Many schools even have "measurement task forces" to explore innovative ways to gather data that are useful in staff decision making. Most principals report they have pilot projects to develop and test the concept of student portfolios. These somewhat fresh approaches to data collection and reporting of student progress raise many critical questions about what is useful and reliable information, and what signifies progress and success. Most principals seem excited about the potential that other forms of information will have for guiding the strategic planning and daily decision making processes.

A high school principal reports: "I just came from a staff meeting where we decided that assessment is the weakest part of every thing we do. Having student outcomes for our school will help us, and so also will the new state competencies for graduation. We have a committee organized now to begin the work of deciding on

outcomes for graduation; starting with where we want to end, and then working backwards."

Another high school principal approached the information task differently: " I give team leaders the overall grade distribution of the school; they give the team distribution data to their teachers, as well as individual teacher distributions. The data raises questions for the team leader to use to guide instructional improvement. However, we now think that the whole assessment system has got to change; the organization has to change from individual and group competition to group and class production of products and services. The kinds of information that will help us respond are still somewhat elusive."

Continual Improvement

Principals in this study reported a shift in their thinking about the function of reliable information for making decisions. Most shared that they are beginning to explore the meaning of "data-based decision making". Continuous progress structures require new data systems for improvement, and the teaching team has evolved as the accountable unit for improvement and results. The more teachers make use of student performance data, the more they are shifting from "improving to meet guidelines", to "improving to help students succeed".

An elementary principal reports: "Managing the quality of work is the hardest part of this job. Last year I asked each team to set goals for student demonstrations by the end of the year. But I'm not satisfied yet; we get data but we're not sure what to do with it. We are looking for alternative forms of assessment for children, and are experimenting with various portfolio formats." Another principal reports: "We're not using report cards at all, and everyone is experimenting with and learning together about portfolios."

Empowerment is an issue as the school's work culture matures, with not all teachers being ready or willing to assume new kinds of responsibility. Principals report that about one third of the teachers from these schools seem pleased about empowerment opportunities, while the other two thirds are still less than enthusiastic. Indeed, these uninvolved teacher populations were a continuing challenge. Interestingly, not many principals perceive that large groups of negative or disinterested teachers exist; the challenge for them is found in the wide range of teacher readiness and willingness to be responsible for improvements.

School improvement goals now focus on pilots for such programs as whole language and reading, continuous progress structures, integrated curriculum, and authentic forms of assessment. Principals spoke about pilots as a strategy to test new ideas, and they seemed less inclined to launch new innovations school wide until their success can be

predicted. Piloting with eager teachers seems to work in adapting innovations to local conditions.

The leadership team is viewed by principals as a major force for innovation. In the past leadership teams were more concerned with monitoring compliance patterns. Now they often are the sparks and facilitators for innovation within teaching teams and task forces. The leadership team also seems to be the training ground for new school leaders, as it develops new systems and strategies for school wide enhancement, and for the interdependence of programs and services.

Human Resource Development

It seems significant that during the interviews about assessment and staff development, no principal in any school mentioned teacher evaluation as a function in improving the quality of work. The practice still continues, but when principals think about developing their school, they focus more on professional development issues. In fact, many spoke about the development of professionals as *the* major investment in the future of the school. Professional growth was the chief strategy identified by principals for advancing the school's work culture and its effects upon students. The goal of human resource development for principals today is the empowerment of teams, developing knowledgeable and skillful professionals in groups, who can meet new challenges. Although important, discussion of compliance with regulations seems to be at most a backdrop for development.

One principal reports: "You have to start training people to lead productive groups, to have interaction skills, and to evaluate what they are doing. They need to know how to coach each other, and to receive coaching from team leaders and administrators. I don't think in the beginning I devoted enough time to staff training in the necessary skills. Each year now the teams choose what kinds of professional development they want, and that's what we do. It always relates to goals; you have to teach them about the natural interdependence between goals and staff development."

Professional development systems in these schools are extensive, and include workshops, using teachers as trainers, conferences, seminars, book clubs, visitations, graduate work, networks and partnerships, and leadership development. There is a strong linkage between the school improvement goals and the focus of the staff development programs within a given year, for new knowledge and skills are viewed as enabling strategies. Professional development centers around innovations and pilots of new programs, strategies and structures, as well as the tools for working collaboratively. Training for teams focuses on facilitation in goal setting, planning, action and results, on

group problem solving, and on personality inventories that enhance group work. Peer coaching and problem solving provides a natural way of working within teams, as professionals learn with and from each other to advance the school's capacity to enhance student success.

All principals reported they now have recognition programs for teachers, and more often now for teams. When teachers understand the power of recognition they in turn develop programs to salute student achievements, and in time celebrate the contributions of parent volunteers and of community agencies and business. In fact, the negative climate that once existed in some schools has been replaced with the celebration of successes and a collective optimism for the future.

Quality Programs and Services

Most principals reported that teachers no longer use text books as a sole source for information, and neither are the practices of tracking and retention viewed as a workable strategy to enhance student success. Teachers are exploring alternative ways to enhance student success within variable structures. The most prevalent forms of program development are the integrated curriculum within teams, and continuous progress structures. New programs tend to center around real life community challenges, and are guided by rubrics that specify levels of performance for students in many subject areas. Integrated and continuous progress programs stimulate interdependence among students and the curriculum, and because of the ways these two innovations enhance student learning, they soon will become institutionalized. In a sense, principals and their staffs are only beginning to understand the potential of integration and continuous progress for students. Authentic assessment pilots tend to be limited now to reading and writing, with the expectation that the concept will be expanded when there is a greater understanding of how the concepts can be operationalized.

One principal shared: "It took us five years of learning how to work together and to be successful with our initiatives before we were ready to tackle the really tough problems with student populations in our school. Now we understand how to work through things, to learn together and do what it takes to succeed. When we began to address questions about certain student populations, we naturally explored continuous progress programs and structures. We began with pilots, and today our entire school is built around nongraded learning communities. while the district has developed new continuous progress systems that we are piloting. We all have learned together, and now continuous progress programs are in most of our elementary schools, with middle and high school systems being developed and piloted."

For instruction, information bases are now guiding decisions more often for student placement, rather than age and grade level. Integrated curriculum pilots are changing the role of teacher from decision maker and controller, to facilitator of student success. Perhaps one of the most striking themes is the changing role of the student in the learning process from individual recipient of information to team-member and producer of products. Forms of cooperative learning, while working toward common goals, are replacing competition and isolation practices among students, and the biggest change of this sort can be seen in high schools. In this study, nongraded structures are replacing tracking patterns at all levels of schooling (K-12), and are having a positive effect on student success patterns. Tutorials that span age levels function to help students at all ages. Technology has begun to cause a revolution in learning, replacing the teacher function of dissemination and drill. This has encouraged new facilitative roles to evolve for the teacher.

Quality Culture

Principals report a shift over time from a "me" to a "we" culture of work. Parents and community agencies, and businesses, seem more integrated into the school's life and now are partners in the development of youth. A climate of success has replaced the crisis orientation from past years, as school cultures move from chaos to clarity of focus for invention. The new interdependent work structures have not only stimulated those who were eager to grow, but many of the "old timers" have been revitalized to become a force for change. Working on task forces tends to release talent and energy for more exploration and design work, and this influences the quality of work within teaching teams. A sense of family is evolving in schools, one that focuses on "community", and the big story centers around the extent of parent and community involvement in the daily life of the school. The walls of school isolation are disintegrating and being replaced with open doors to participate in the life of not only the school, but also the community.

One principal shared: "Teachers are telling me that they aren't afraid to try new things; there no longer is fear of reprimand. They are doing an excellent job creating integrated curriculum programs now." Another principal reported: "the most important ability is for a team to evaluate their own work. They need training in how to ask questions and look at their work objectively. Collaboration allows them to have a quality product. Their knowledge base is high because of our continuous staff development. The focus of our work is on student achievement."

Within most of the 28 schools a "learning community" is forming, one that asks new questions and where over time the staff confidence is developed to explore, invent

and examine new options. And what keeps the change process moving? Principals report a growing sense of moral responsibility among the staff to do whatever it takes to help all students succeed, especially the at-risk populations. A growing focus on student success provides the energy for continuous development. The picture of collaboration exists within teams, to be sure, but it also extends now to other teams and task forces, and to networks and partnerships across institutions.

Customer Success and Satisfaction

What effect is the evolving culture of work having on student populations? Rather than sharing quantitative student performance patterns, principals shared with us stories of new concentrations of adult energy to help more students succeed. Principals also reported noticeable growth patterns among at-risk populations. Also, many parents work as volunteers, serve on councils and task forces, function as mentors and tutors, provide dinners and other special events featuring students, and participate in training sessions with the staff.

Considerable effort has been made by principals to engage local businesses and agencies in the school's challenges, and the list of participating organizations is quite extensive. One principal in a rural setting said: "We've been adopted by the chamber of commerce, and many businesses are sponsoring school attendance projects, the ABC program, specific children, clothing drives, and adopting needy families. It's not just money that we get from these sources; we have become a part of the community, and together we established a way to care about families through the school. The partnerships with our businesses have developed relationships of caring." Schools such as this one are more integrated with community businesses and agencies now, and gone is the sense of school isolation from the community, or the practice of business only helping the school. Many programs also exist for students to work, for example in nursing homes, and to shadow professionals to learn about career options. New innovative programs enable students to become actively engaged in their communities, while still in school, and to interact with the community in its daily life.

Conclusions

We learned from this study that when principals are knowledgeable and skillful in managing change, they are also confident in strategic planning and decision making tasks. Change occurs over time, and is a different phenomenon in each school. Change is not time bound, but rather is determined by the readiness of the faculty to address the

challenges they face; and developing the readiness of the staff to address increasingly complex problems over time is the new work of principals. A constant challenge is to think clearly about the integration of functions and services toward common goals. This translates as developing an interdependence among school planning, staff development, program development and school assessment systems, and the integration gradually matures over time for these principals. A shared vision of success for all students becomes the umbrella for all development activity.

Principals who understand the change process tend to be successful in engineering school development, and in this case study, MPS provided the fund of knowledge and skills for a systemic framework on which that happened. A strong vision of success for the school eventually permeates the culture, and drives continuous program and professional development. Collaboration takes many forms as cultures mature, beginning within teams, and moving out to task forces across the school and district, and then to networks and partnerships across different types of institutions. The leadership team is a major source of energy for the school, one that stimulates innovation and nurtures exploration. Perhaps the most striking pattern found in the principals' voice is the strength of the principal's vision of success for all students, and a belief in the capacity of the faculty to respond to complex, difficult and changing conditions. Their belief in the capacity of teachers to be able to respond to the needs of students today tends to provide moral strength for principals to meet the political challenges along the way.

Transforming the work culture of schools from bureaucratic patterns to those that are more responsive to needs requires leaders who understand the challenge, have a passion for systemic change, embrace systems thinking, and possess the facilitation skills to engineer school development systematically over time. The voice of successful principals in our study provides hope for breaking the deadlock on traditional work cultures, and for transforming them over time into vital learning organizations.

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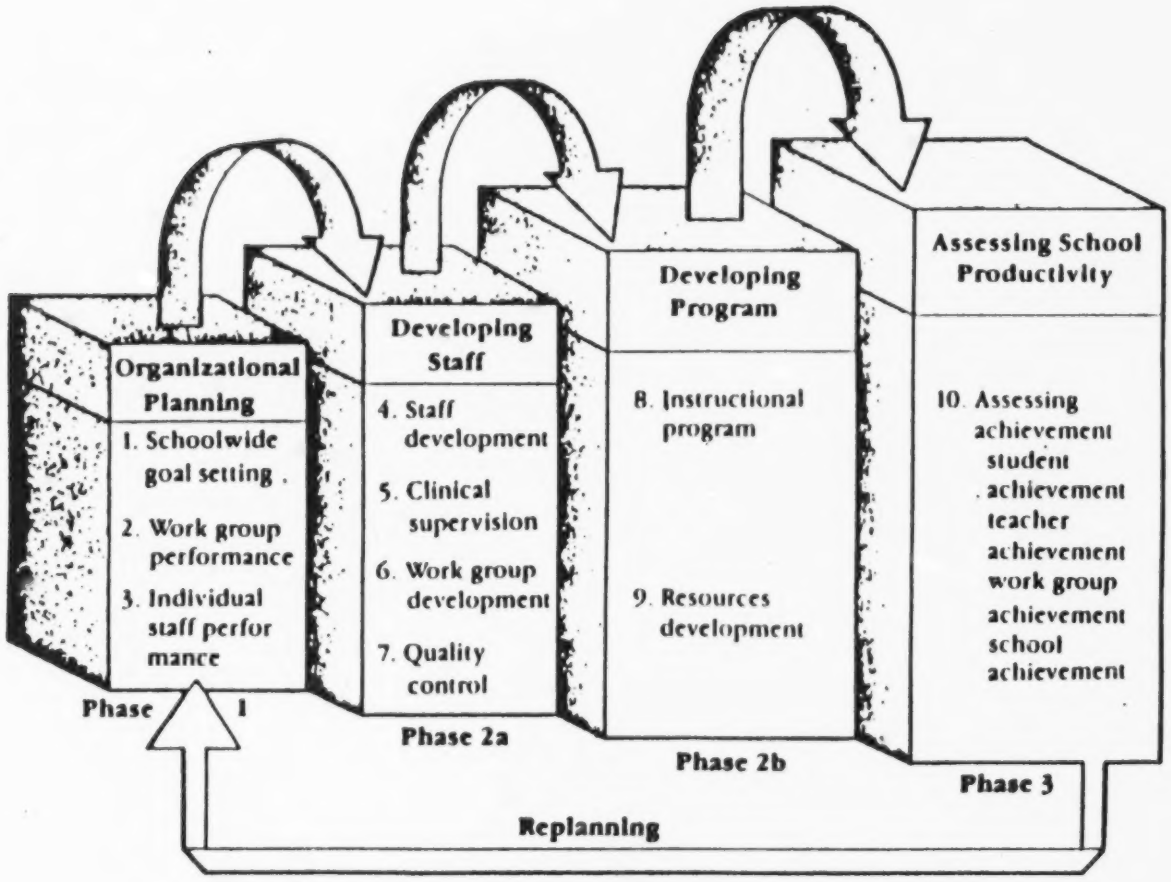
FIGURE 1: # MANAGING PRODUCTIVE SCHOOLS



Productive School Work Culture: Shared Tasks

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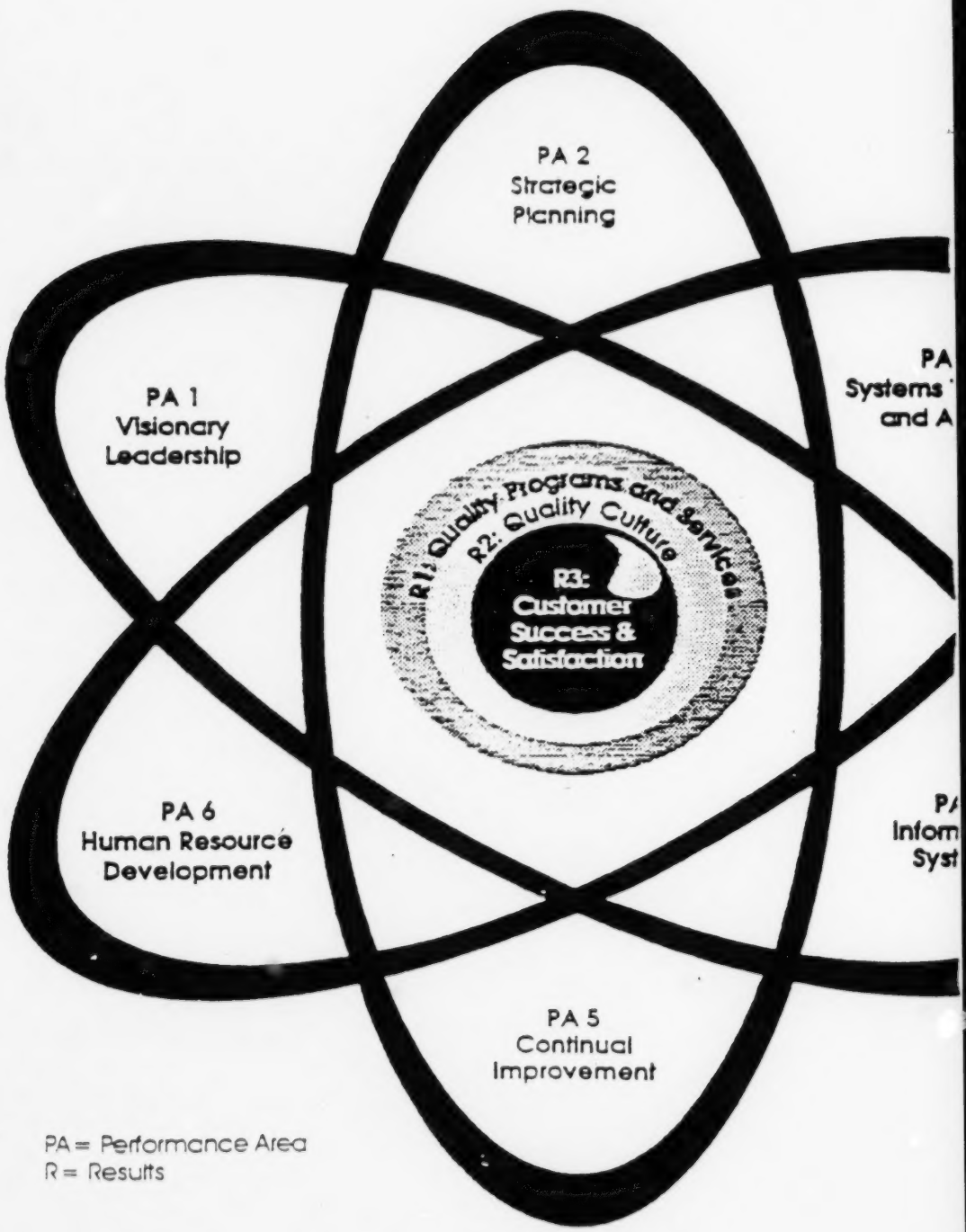

PA = Performance Area
R = Results

FIGURE 2" Quality Performance System